

REFERENCE HEIGHT GOLF TEE

1. Background of the Invention

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A. Field of Invention

This invention relates to the art of golf tees, and more specifically, to golf tees having at least a first mark for indicating the tee height, that is, the distance between the 10 golf ball that rests on the golf tee and the ground surface.

B. Description of the Related Art

Golf tees are well known in the art. Known golf tees are sufficient for their 15 intended purpose, namely, holding the golf ball above the ground so that a golfer may strike or hit the golf ball with a golf club. If the golf ball is not consistently placed the same distance (height) from the ground, however, the golfer's ability to properly strike (hit) the golf ball with a golf club will be adversely affected. Thus, properly teeing the golf ball (the action of placing the golf tee into the ground and then placing a golf ball on 20 the tee is termed "teeing") is a critical aspect of playing golf. For example, if the golfer tees too high (that is, adjusts the golf ball on the golf tee too high with respect to the ground surface), when the golf ball is hit, it will tend to be directed too far upward instead of outward. Similarly, if the golfer tees too low (that is, adjusts the golf ball on the golf tee too low with respect to the ground surface), when the golf ball is hit, it will 25 tend to be directed downward into the ground. As a result, teeing too high and teeing too low both tend to limit the distance the golf ball can be carried.

What is needed, then, is way to consistently tee a golf ball at the same height from the ground.

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II. Summary of the Invention

According to one aspect of the present invention, a golf tee has a head portion for use in supporting a golf ball and a stem portion for use in supporting the golf tee into the ground. The stem portion has a marking means for use in indicating the distance between the head portion of the golf tee and the ground surface.

According to another aspect of the invention, the marking means comprises a plurality of bands along the longitude of the stem portion.

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The marking means of this invention thus provides a way to consistently tee a golf ball at the same height from the ground.

Still other benefits and advantages of the invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art to which it pertains upon a reading and understanding of the following detailed specification.

III. Brief Description of the Drawings

20 The invention may take physical form in certain parts and arrangement of parts, a preferred embodiment of which will be described in detail in this specification and illustrated in the accompanying drawings which form a part hereof and wherein:

25 FIGURE 1 is a side view of a first style golf tee incorporating the marking means of this invention.

FIGURE 2 is a side view of a second style golf tee incorporating the marking means of this invention.

30 FIGURE 3 is a side view of a golf tee inserted into the ground such that a first tee height D1 is defined.

FIGURE 4 is a side view of a golf tee inserted into the ground such that a second tee height D2 is defined.

5 **IV. Description of the Preferred Embodiment**

Referring now to the drawings wherein the showings are for purposes of illustrating a preferred embodiment of the invention only and not for purposes of limiting the same, FIGURES 1 and 2 each show a golf tee 10 equipped with the marking means 10 20 of this invention. FIGURE 1 shows a golf tee 10 that is of conventional dimensions while FIGURE 2 shows a golf tee 10 that is longer and more slender. It should be noted that the marking means 20 of this invention can be used with the golf tees of FIGURES 1 and 2 as well as any golf tee chosen with sound engineering judgment. This invention 15 will thus work with golf tees formed of any material (including, but not limited to, wood, plastic, composites both natural and manmade) and having any dimensions.

With continuing reference to FIGURES 1 and 2, each golf tee 10 has a head portion 12 and a stem portion 14. As is commonly known in the art, the head portion 12 accepts a golf ball (not shown) and thus typically includes a recess 16 that receives the 20 generally spherically shaped golf ball. The golf ball sits or rests on the head portion 12. The stem portion 14 has a first end 13 that is attached to the head portion 12 and a second end 15 that is inserted into the ground. Preferably the second end 15 has a conical end, as shown, to make insertion into the ground easier. Once the golf tee 10 is inserted into the ground, the stem portion 14 holds the golf tee 10 as well as the golf ball in place with 25 respect to the ground.

With reference now to FIGURES 3 and 4, the golf tee 10 is shown inserted into the ground 30. FIGURE 3 illustrates a first distance D1 between the ground surface 32 and the top of the golf tee 10. This first distance D1 is thus representative of a first tee height, that is, a first distance between the ground surface 32 and the golf ball (not shown) which would rest on the head portion 12. FIGURE 4 shows the same golf tee 10

as shown in FIGURE 3 but this time inserted into the ground 30 sufficient to establish a second tee height, that is, a second distance D2 between the ground surface 32 and the top of the golf tee 10. This second distance D2 is also representative of the distance between the ground surface 32 and the golf ball (not shown) which would rest on the 5 head portion 12. As can be seen, the second distance D2 is less than the first distance D1. In order to maintain consistent golf play, it is very likely that a golfer would want to control the height between the golf ball and the ground. One golfer, for example, may desire to consistently tee at the first distance D1 while another golfer may desire to consistently tee at the second distance D2. Alternatively, one golfer may desire to tee at 10 the first distance D1 for one golf shot and at the second distance D2 for another shot. In any case, prior to this invention, it was difficult for a golfer to consistently tee the golf ball to the desired height.

With continuing reference to FIGURES 3 and 4, the marking means 20 of this 15 invention makes it easy for a golfer to consistently tee a golf ball to the desired height. In the embodiment shown, the marking means 20 is a plurality of bands 22 that extend along the length of the stem portion 14. These bands 22 make it very easy for a golfer to consistently tee at the desired height and with visual confirmation. To obtain a tee height of the first distance D1 as shown in FIGURE 3, for example, the golfer only needs to 20 insert the golf tee 10 into the ground 30 until the fourth band 22 from the top (from the head portion 12) intersects with the ground surface 32. This can be easily observed by the golfer because the bands 22 are distinct markings on the outer surface of the stem portion 14. To obtain a tee height of the second distance D2 as shown in FIGURE 4, the golfer only needs to insert the golf tee 10 into the ground 30 until the third band 22 from 25 the top (from the head portion 12) intersects with the ground surface 32.

With reference now to FIGURES 1 and 2, a preferred orientation of the bands 22 over the length of the stem portion 14 is shown. A space 24 is shown positioned between each band 22. The specific spacing and coloring of the bands 22 and the spaces 24 can 30 vary considerably. With the embodiments shown, for example, the bands 22 are substantially equal in width (measured along the longitudinal axis X-X of the golf tee) as

are the spaces 24. However, the bands 22 and spaces 24 may have varied widths and would still be within the contemplation of the inventors. The bands 22 may have a width of 0.25 inches, for example, while the spaces 24 have widths of 0.125 inches.

5 With continuing reference to FIGURES 1 and 2, it is preferred that the bands 22 have a color (or various colors) that is sufficiently different from the color (or various colors) of the spaces 24. This difference in color makes it easy for the golfer to see the tee height. The method for adding the bands 22 to the golf tee 10 can be any chosen with sound engineering judgment. For a few examples, the bands 22 may be imbedded, 10 engraved, lazar etched or machined into the golf tee 10 material itself. Alternatively, the bands 22 may be applied to the outer surface of the golf tee 10 by paint, die, tape, decal or pinstripe. Any color of bands 22 or spaces 24 can be used. For example, the spaces 24 and the golf tee 10 itself may be white with the bands 22 colored black. It is also contemplated that particular colors may be used for a particular purpose. The bands 22 15 and spaces 24 may, for example, have colors that match a local high school or college team colors.

With continuing reference to FIGURES 1 and 2, it should also be noted that the use of bands 22 is only one example for the marking means 20. In place of bands 22, a 20 single (or multiple) line could be added to the stem portion 14. Alternatively, a number could be placed on the stem portion 14 in place of the bands 22. Thus, for example, the number "1" could be placed on the golf tee 10 in place of the first band 22 from the top, the number "2" could be placed on the golf tee 10 in place of the second band 22 from the top, etc. Of course a band 22 and a number could be used in combination.

25 Having thus described the invention, it is now claimed: